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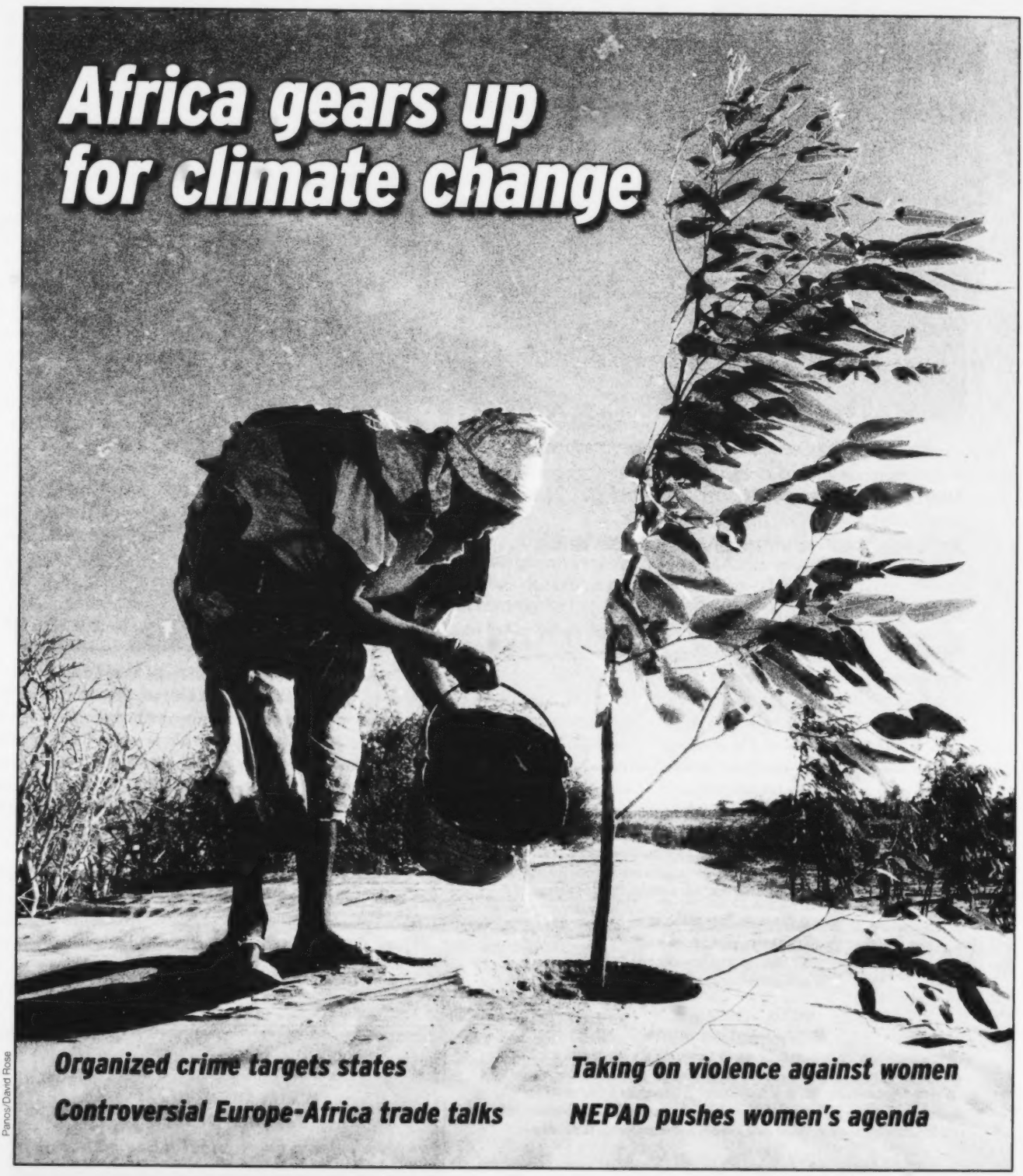

Africa gears up for climate change

Organized crime targets states

Controversial Europe-Africa trade talks

Taking on violence against women

NEPAD pushes women's agenda

Panos/David Rose

AFRICA RENEWAL

United Nations
Vol. 21 No. 2 July 2007

contents

Cover article

Climate change: Africa gets ready.... 14

A threat to peace? 15

Coping with less rain in Burkina Faso..... 19

Photo: Sven Torfinn

Ethiopian farmer Teshoma Abera laments the absence of rainfall and the failure of his crops.

Also in this Issue

Organized crime targets weak African states 3

Taking on violence against women in Africa.... 4

Global spotlight and uneven progress 5

Women push onto Africa's agenda 8

Africans fear 'ruin' in Europe trade talks..... 10

Departments

Agenda 23

Books 23

Watch 24

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Organized crime targets weak African states

UN urges stronger police, anti-corruption action to fight crime networks

By **Gumisai Mutume**

In one swoop in April, authorities in Guinea-Bissau seized 635 kilogrammes of cocaine, worth an estimated $50 mn. But the traffickers managed to escape with the rest of the 2.5-tonne consignment because the police could not give chase. United Nations Office on Drug Control (UNODC) Executive Director Antonio Maria Costa commended the seizure, but lamented the poor state of policing in the West African nation. "It is regrettable that the rest of the consignment was not intercepted, but hardly surprising as the police are woefully ill-equipped and often do not even have enough gasoline to operate their vehicles."

That same month, media reports noted that drug traffickers had established a transit area along the Gulf of Guinea as a way to elude tighter policing off the coast of Europe. Fragile states in Africa are often overwhelmed by other pressing challenges such as poverty, weak public institutions or political instability and can provide a haven for such groups. One of the illicit networks, operating in Guinea-Bissau, is made up of South American suppliers, African transporters and European distributors.

Guinea-Bissau, still recovering from a civil war that ended six years ago, is particularly vulnerable. It is one of the world's 10 poorest nations, lacking secure prisons or adequate border patrols. "All the institutions have collapsed," explains Mr. Koli Kouame of the UN International Narcotics Control Board (INCB). Tighter policing on the Iberian Peninsula, which has traditionally been the transit point for drugs heading for Europe from South America, is forcing the syndicates to seek alternative routes through Africa. Strategically located close to Europe and with a porous coastline made up of a labyrinth of islands, Guinea-Bissau provides an ideal sanctuary.

Reuter / Radu Sigheti

Kenyan police prepare to burn cocaine sachets seized from drug smugglers.

High demand

Demand for drugs such as cocaine is at an all-time high in Europe. A kilogramme of cocaine reportedly sells for about $80,000 in Europe, compared with $50,000 in the US, the world's biggest market for the narcotic.

Between 2000 and 2003, African authorities managed to seize only an average of 600 kilogrammes of cocaine per year, 0.2 per cent of the drugs estimated to have been trafficked in the region during that period, UNODC noted in a report on Africa in 2005.

The case of Guinea-Bissau illustrates some of the challenges facing many poor African countries. With weak enforcement capability, underpaid officials and porous national borders, these countries provide an ideal environment for organized criminal rings to extract or tranship illicit commodities.

Africa has far fewer police per citizen than other regions. There are only 180 police per 100,000 people on the continent, while in Asia there are 363. Moreover, when police officers are underpaid and government officials are susceptible to corruption, the job of traffickers only becomes easier. Public officials can be bribed to look the other way or even be induced to work in direct collusion with traffickers.

Transnational crime syndicates deal in a wide range of illicit commodities, including narcotics, diamonds, petroleum, ivory and weapons. They also smuggle human beings. The UN has reported that 90 per cent of African countries are affected by human trafficking flows, either as a source, transit site or destination.

Because drug trafficking, prostitution, gambling, loan-sharking and official corruption are illegal and many transactions are consensual, experts note that the extent of organized crime is hard to establish on the basis of official data, in Africa or elsewhere. "But perception surveys, as well as international crime intelligence and seizures of contraband, suggest that Africa may have become the continent most targeted by organized crime," UNODC states in a 2005 report, *Crime and Development in Africa*. "Lack of official controls makes the continent vulnerable to money laundering and corruption activities, both of which are vital to the expansion of organized crime."

Impeding development

Policy planners point out that organized crime can derail development pro-

see page 21

Taking on violence against women in Africa

International norms, local activism start to alter laws, attitudes

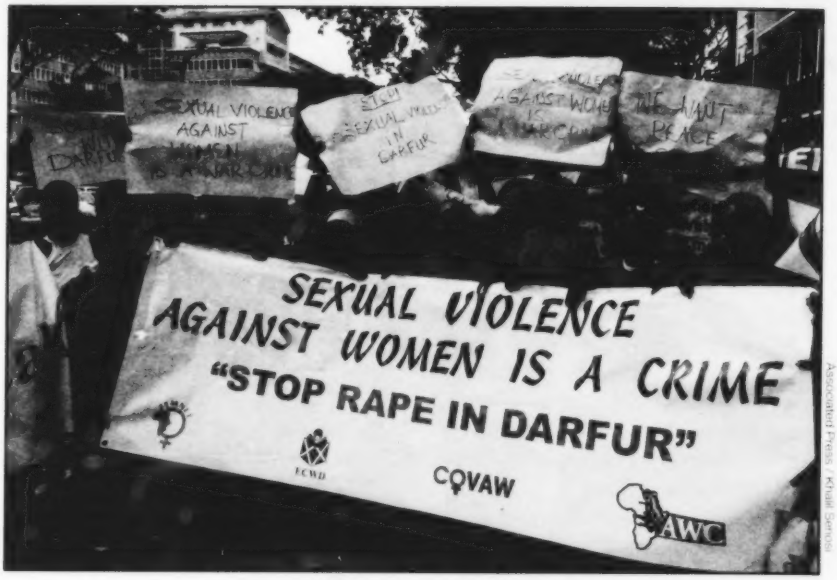
By **Mary Kimani**

The incident was not unusual in Africa. In December 1998 a Kenyan police officer, Felix Nthiwa Munayo, got home late and demanded meat for his dinner. There was none in the house. Enraged, he beat his wife, Betty Kavata. Paralyzed and brain-damaged, Ms. Kavata died five months later, on her 28th birthday.

But unlike many such cases, Ms. Kavata's death did not pass in silence. The Kenyan media covered the story extensively. Images of the fatally injured woman and news of her death generated nationwide debate on domestic violence. There followed five years of protests, demonstrations and lobbying by non-governmental organizations (NGOs), as well as by outraged men and parliamentarians. Finally, the government passed a family protection bill criminalizing wife-beating and other forms of domestic violence.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), violence affects millions of women in Africa. In a 2005 study on women's health and domestic violence, the WHO found that 50 per cent of women in Tanzania and 71 per cent of women in Ethiopia's rural areas reported beatings or other forms of violence by husbands or other intimate partners.

In South Africa, reports Amnesty International, about one woman is killed by her husband or boyfriend every six hours. In Zimbabwe, six out of 10 murder cases tried in the Harare High Court in 1998 were related to domestic violence. In Kenya, the attorney general's office reported in 2003 that domestic violence accounted for 47 per cent of all homicides.



Associated Press/ Khalil Senosi

Kenyan women demonstrate against rape in Darfur, Sudan: Violence against women is becoming an increasingly public issue across Africa.

'No boundaries'

Domestic violence is a global problem. In Europe, estimates the WHO, violence in the home is the primary cause of injury and death for women aged 16–44, more lethal than road accidents or cancer. Indeed, "violence against women," said then-UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan in 1999, "knows no boundaries of geography, culture or wealth. It is perhaps the most shameful human rights violation." And, he added, it is "perhaps the most pervasive."

Violence against women goes beyond beatings. It includes forced marriage, dowry-related violence, marital rape, sexual harassment, intimidation at work and in educational institutions, forced pregnancy, forced abortion, forced sterilization, trafficking and forced prostitution.

Such practices cause trauma, injuries and death. Female genital cutting, for example, is a common cultural practice in parts of Africa. Yet it can cause "bleeding and infection, urinary incontinence, difficulties with childbirth and even death," reports the WHO. The organization estimates that 130 million girls have undergone the procedure globally and 2 million are at risk each year, despite international agreements banning the practice.

Sexual violence is another problem. A local organization in Zaria, Nigeria, found that 16 per cent of patients with sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) were girls under the age of five, a sign of sexual assault. In the single year 1990, the Genito-Urinary Centre in Harare, Zimbabwe, treated more than 900 girls under 12 for STDs. Such assaults, observes a WHO publication, put "African women and girls at higher risk of sexually transmitted diseases [including HIV/AIDS] than men and boys."

Rooted in culture

Abusers of women tend to view violence as the only way to solve family conflicts, according to a 1999 study on violence against women by the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health near Baltimore, US. Perpetrators typically have a history of violent behaviour, grew up in violent homes and often abuse alcohol and drugs.

The story of Janet Akinyi in Kenya is a case in point. In 2006 she filed for divorce and custody of her children after her husband attempted to kill her with a knife. She had endured violent beatings throughout her 10 years of marriage. "We used to be okay until he started drinking," Ms. Akinyi told *Africa Renewal*. "Then he would get furious at anything and start beating me. He would say it is the only way to teach me to respect him."

However, violence against women, the Johns Hopkins study points out, goes beyond the brutalization of women by individuals. The prevalence of the phenomenon, "cuts across social and economic situations, and is deeply embedded in cultures around the world — so much so that millions of women consider it a way of life."

In a report by the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) in 2000, the agency noted that in interviews in Africa and Asia, "the right of a husband to beat or physically intimidate his wife" came out as "a deeply held conviction." Even societies where women appear to enjoy better status "condone or at least tolerate a certain amount of violence against women."

Such cultural norms put women in subservient positions in relation to their husbands and other males. That inferior status makes women "undervalued, disrespected and prone to violence by their male counterparts," observed a 2003 report by the UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM). Ms. Radhika Coomaraswamy, the former UN special rapporteur on violence against women, agreed, noting that discriminatory norms, combined with economic and social inequalities, "serve to keep women subservient and perpetuate violence by men against them."

Focusing specifically on Africa, Ms. Heidi Hudson found in a 2006 study by the South African Institute of Security Studies that "the subservient status of women, particularly rural women, in many African countries is deeply rooted in tradition."

Global spotlight and uneven progress

In addition to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the 1993 Vienna Declaration on Human Rights and the 1995 Declaration of the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing specified actions to protect women from discrimination and violence. Similarly, a 1993 UN General Assembly Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women called on governments to condemn such violence and to refrain from using customs, traditions or religious beliefs to avoid their obligations to end it. These agreements serve as the framework for the mandate of the UN special rapporteur on violence against women.

In 2003, African governments adopted a protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights in which they committed themselves to end discrimination and violence against women. The protocol came into force in November 2005 after ratification by 15 states.

Today, the UN special rapporteur and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) serve as two of the main avenues through which issues of gender violence can be addressed internationally. CEDAW encourages states to report on the extent, causes and effects of violence, and on the measures they have taken to counter it. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) can submit supplementary reports. The system has had some successes and faced many challenges.

Uganda — In 2002, CEDAW expressed concern about the absence of laws to address the high incidence of violence against women in Uganda. In the absence of a domestic violence law, the police and courts rely on laws that cover assault and homicide. The committee strongly recommended the speedy enactment of two bills that have languished in parliament for a decade: the Domestic Relations Bill, which is intended to consolidate laws on marriage and divorce, and the Sexual Offences Bill. But political leaders described the bills as "not urgent."

Nigeria — In 1998, CEDAW also raised concerns about the prevalence of violence against women and girls, "including domestic violence and sexual harassment in the workplace," in Nigeria. The minister for women affairs and social development responded that the government had difficulty addressing the issue because "women hardly report violence to the police for fear of reprisal from both the husband and wider family." Five years later, a study by Amnesty International in Lagos found that there still were very few criminal prosecutions in such cases.

Morocco — In 1997, CEDAW asked the Moroccan government to address violence against women and establish support services for victims of violence. The following year a Geneva-based NGO, the Organisation mondiale contre la torture (OMCT), submitted an alternative report outlining several laws that made Moroccan women vulnerable to abuse. Because of activism by the OMCT and other international and local women's groups, Moroccan laws changed in February 2004. The minimum marriageable age for girls was raised from 15 to 18. A legal obligation for a wife to obey her husband was scrapped, and women were permitted to contract their own marriages and more easily sue for divorce.

Women as property

This is true to such an extent, Ms. Hudson added, that women can be perceived as objects or property, a view reflected especially clearly in practices such as wife inheritance and dowry payments.

The impact of both practices was illustrated by a 2003 study on domestic violence in Uganda by the US-based Human Rights Watch (HRW). The study found that families justified forcing widows to be inherited by other males in the family with arguments that the family had "all contributed to the bride price" and that therefore the woman was "family property." Once inherited, a widow lost her husband's property, which went to the new husband. And if a woman sought separation or divorce, the dowry had to be reimbursed. Often, the study found, "a woman's family is unable or unwilling" to refund the dowry, and her brothers may beat her to force her back to her husband or in-laws "because they don't want to give back cows."

Tanzania's first president, Julius Nyerere, was an early critic of such cultural practices. He noted in 1984 that denying women the right to inherit and own property leaves them economically vulnerable and dependent. That creates a situation in which "women in Africa toil all their lives on land that they do not own, to produce what they do not control, and at the end of the marriage through divorce or death, they can be sent away empty-handed."

Since Mr. Nyerere's time, Africa's economic decline has left many women in even worse conditions. Their plight is so severe, noted a study by the WHO and the Joint UN Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), that many women see no option but to remain with husbands who routinely batter them. The women stay because men "serve as vital opportunities for financial and social security, or for satisfying material aspirations." Moreover, as such women are often both poor and uneducated, "the combination of depen-

dence and subordination can make it very difficult . . . to demand safer sex or to end relationships that carry the threat of HIV/AIDS infection."

The WHO found that women with at least a secondary education were more able to negotiate greater autonomy and control of resources within marriage, have a wider range of choices in partners and are more able to choose whether and when to marry. Such capacities have often been associated with lower levels of violence in the home.

Women's activism

Women are not just victims. They have been working actively for change. In Senegal, after the 1996 rape of a nine-year-old by a community and political leader, the NGO Association pour la promotion de la femme sénégalaise (APROFES) initiated protests, leafleting campaigns and local theatre performances to publicize the case. That thwarted efforts by the man and his supporters to force the girl's family to withdraw charges. APROFES also provided legal counsel at the subsequent trial. The court proceeding, attended by thousands, yielded a 10-year prison sentence for the perpetrator, the first conviction for such a crime in Senegal.

Women have also been active internationally to gain better mechanisms to protect women. This has included successfully pushing for adoption of international treaties and instruments, such as the 1979 United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (see box, page 5). That convention commits governments to change discriminatory practices and laws, including those that permit early marriage, bar women from inheriting property or relegate them to a secondary status.

The convention entered into force in 1981, and as a result the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) was officially established. In 1992, the committee affirmed that violence against women was a "violation of their internationally recognized human rights" and "a form of discrimination" that "nullified their right to freedom, security and life."

The committee asked governments to identify and end customs and practices that perpetuate violence against women. It urged them to conduct public education, create safe havens, institute counseling and rehabilitation programmes for victims, sensitize law-enforcement officials and draft relevant laws to protect women against all kinds of violence.

Panos / Lida Taylor

A girl who was raped in Somalia.

Unfortunately, UNIFEM found in 2003, few countries have met those obligations. Many countries, reported the agency, do not collect information on violence against women, so there is little data available to assess whether measures are having any impact. Worse, few countries have enacted laws to prevent abuse. As of that year, only 17 sub-Saharan countries had specific laws against domestic violence. Ten did not have any laws on rape or sexual assault and 30 had no laws prohibiting female genital mutilation.

As of 2007, out of 179 countries that are party to the convention, only 89 have laws specifically outlawing domestic violence. Ninety governments have laws against sexual harassment. In Africa, only South Africa has enacted all relevant laws to punish violence against women.

Slow change in laws

At a 2007 forum in New York of the UN's Commission on the Status of Women, Kenyan Member of Parliament Njoki Ndugu illustrated the challenges women face when trying to get male-dominated parliaments to pass laws in women's interests. "The motion to amend the sexual violence act had been introduced several times since independence and failed," Ms. Ndugu said. "Each time, it was seen by the male members of parliament as giving too much power to women." Some male parliamentarians, she added, "argued that stricter anti-sexual-violence laws would lead to men being falsely accused of raping women."

The sexual violence bill in Kenya passed only after certain sections, such as one that would have outlawed marital rape, were removed. In Uganda, similar laws have languished for more than a decade. Participants from Tanzania and Zimbabwe said they had faced similar resistance.

There have been some exceptions. In Rwanda, UNIFEM worked with the government to create a law requiring all parties to field equal numbers of male and female candidates in parliamentary elections. Today, 49 per cent of Rwanda's legislators are women, the highest rate in the world. The legislature has passed several progressive laws, including one that gives female children the right to inherit their parents' land and property, a right that was traditionally reserved for males.

This advance was especially important for female survivors of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda. Without the new law, they would have been beholden to male relatives and vulnerable to abuse. But they can

now take control of their family resources and provide for themselves.

In South Africa, men and women legislators together helped pass the Domestic Violence Act in 1998, at a time when the country had the lowest number of female ministers and parliamentarians since the end of apartheid in 1994. Legislation introducing minimum sentences for rape and tightening bail requirements for those accused of rape was enacted in 1997, and guidelines for the handling of sexual offences were passed the following year.

A police station in Mombasa, Kenya, with a special unit for crimes against children and women. Activists are urging the police and courts to take such crimes more seriously.

Enforcement

Putting new laws on the books is not enough. Law enforcement and court mechanisms also have to be made friendly and accessible to women, says Ms. Mary Wandia, the Africa women's rights coordinator for the non-governmental Action Aid International. "The police force is often uninterested in domestic violence," she observes. "Unless a woman can show physical evidence of the violence she has suffered, police and law-enforcement authorities are often unwilling to believe and assist her."

Moreover, Ms. Wandia adds, "many communities are complicit in excusing or condoning violence against women, and in so doing, tacitly approve of the abuse." Neighbours and friends may hesitate to intervene in abusive relationships because marital relations are often considered a "private matter."

According to Ms. Thoraya Ahmed Obaid, executive director of the UNFPA, there is a need "to ensure that all those who respond to violence against women — whether they are police officers, judges, lawyers, immigration officials, medical personnel or social workers — are sensitized and trained to provide a response that is compassionate and comprehensive."

In Rwanda, gender desks have been established at police stations, staffed mostly by trained women who help victims of sexual and other violence. They investigate cases and ensure that evidence is available for court proceedings. As a result, in 2006 the Rwandan police referred 1,777 rape cases to prosecutors, resulting in 803 convictions. The gender desks have "improved reporting and response to these crimes," Ms. Josephine Odera, UNIFEM's director for Central Africa, told *Africa Renewal*. "What we need now is to expand this approach to more countries."

In 1996, the government of Burkina Faso passed a law prohibiting female genital cutting. To make the law effective, the authorities launched a public education campaign on the issue, added the topic to the school curriculum and opened a telephone help line for girls at risk. As a result, reports Plan International, there were 400 convictions between 1996 and 2005, with sentences of up to three years and fines equivalent to US$1,800. Public support for female genital cutting has fallen.

However, even good laws can fail if the legal process is too expensive. When Ms. Akinyi, in Kenya, filed for divorce after her husband's attempt to kill her, she had to borrow money for legal fees from friends. "I have already spent KS35,000," equivalent to US$500, she told *Africa Renewal*. "I tried to get legal aid, but I was told there many other cases more dire than mine. Some women have had cases pending before the court for five years because they are relying on free public defenders who handle too many cases. I now realize why so many women never leave their husbands. How can they possibly afford this process?"

"There have to be free legal services," argues Ms. Saran Daraba Kaba, a former government minister in Guinea who is now executive director of the Mano River Women's Network, which works in Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia. "There is a need for lawyers who are well trained in helping the victim to make an informed decision. We have created free legal clinics and trained local lawyers to address that. It is a very new model, but it's something that has promise for the future."

Changing social attitudes

To Ms. Kaba, the biggest challenge is changing the social attitudes and beliefs that confine women to an inferior status. "We have to get more women to know their legal rights. We have to teach our people why it is important to protect women and how it benefits the entire community when women are afforded better protection," she argues.

Educating both men and women is critical. The WHO study found that 80 per cent of women surveyed in rural Egypt believed that beatings were justified if the woman refused to have sex with her partner. In Ghana, more women (50 per cent) than men (43 per cent) believed that a man was justi-

see page 22

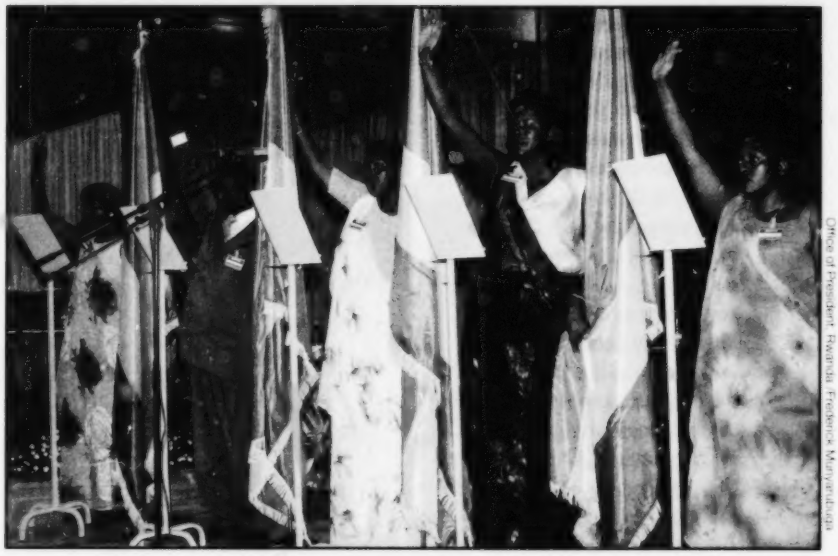
Women push onto Africa's agenda

NEPAD responds to advocates for women's rights

By **Itai Madamombe**

The status of women in many African countries is improving. "Africa is in a period of great experiment," says Ms. Anne Marie Goetz, who heads the governance, peace and security division at the UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM). "Things are starting to change, as countries see a window of opportunity to create ways for women to contribute their skills and talents to national development."

And women themselves are driving that change, notes Ms. Goetz. "Women, through their groups, are making it clear they are not putting up with the status quo anymore." Women are demanding, among other things, laws that guarantee their rights to manage economic resources and that protect them from violence. Such pressure has pushed governments to be more responsive. Countries have begun to respond with commitments to reduce maternal deaths, get more girls into school, give women rights to own land on a more equal basis with men and ensure that a minimum number of women get into key positions in government.



Office of President Rwanda Frederick Munyaneza

Rwandan members of parliament taking oath of office: Nearly half of the country's legislators are female.

'Don't just complain'

When African heads of state originally launched their continental development plan, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), in 2001, women's organizations banded together to protest the initiative's seeming lack of sensitivity to gender issues. They demanded that NEPAD's proponents ensure that women were not frozen out of the social and economic benefits promised by the initiative. Ms. Litha Musyimi-Ogana, an advocate for women's rights, was among those in the forefront asking for change.

"I got the NEPAD foundation document into my hands," recalls Ms. Musyimi-Ogana. "I rushed to the goals and the second one said that empowering women was a priority. I got excited. Then I flipped the pages to find a plan of action that said concretely what NEPAD would do — one, two and three — for women. There was nothing there."

The once skeptical activist is today part of NEPAD's management structure, heading the Gender and Civil Society Organizations Unit formed in 2004 to bring women's issues into policies, programmes and activities related to the initiative. The unit, based at the NEPAD Secretariat in Johannesburg, South Africa, was created in direct response to recommendations by women's groups, civil society organizations and other stakeholders.

"Our attitude in protesting was: If you see something missing, help add to it," Ms. Musyimi-Ogana reflects. "Don't just complain. While the NEPAD declaration was far from perfect, I saw a commitment, I saw a spirit in it. It is the first time heads of state are committing to Africa voluntarily. This is historic. I said to myself: 'I am going to support this vision and change things from within if necessary'."

Monitoring rights

In one of NEPAD's most innovative initiatives, the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), African governments carry out periodic reviews of the policies and practices of participating countries to assess progress in promoting democracy, good governance and economic management. Among other indicators, countries participating in the peer review are required to demonstrate the measures they have taken to promote and protect women's rights, as well as the laws they have adopted and other steps they may have taken to enhance the participation of women in society. They are expected to back up their claims with figures on the percentages of women in decision-making positions, parliament and so on.

Rwanda has been a leader in the number of women elected to parliament, notes UNIFEM's Ms. Goetz. The constitution mandates that at least 30 per cent of parliamentary deputies be women, but the strong push to support women candidates during elections has resulted in women holding 49 per cent of seats.

NEPAD's peer review report on Rwanda, released in 2006, found that in addition to constitutional provisions, "Rwanda has created a plethora of institutions and development programmes to enhance the status and welfare of women in all walks of life." Inheritance, land,

labour and family laws were reformed to address discrimination against women.

Despite the huge strides, the APRM's country review team reported that women still face many hurdles. For married women to carry out commercial activities, for example, they still need their husband's permission. Rwanda was advised to address such disparities.

Similar reviews, accompanied by proposals to improve women's status and opportunities, as well as other recommendations, have also been carried out for Ghana and Kenya. Two dozen other countries are also part of the APRM, and await peer reviews.

Hands on the purse strings

Overall in sub-Saharan Africa, an average 16.8 per cent of parliamentary seats are held by women, close to the world average of 17.1 per cent, according to estimates by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), an international body that serves as a forum for dialogue among legislators.

"Getting women into key positions is critical," Ms. Goetz points out. "If you have women in public office — though not always the case — they tend to be more sensitive to the needs of female citizens." The ability of women deputies to bring about real change, however, depends on the stance of their parties and the calibre of the representatives themselves.

Occupying top government posts does not necessarily translate to influence. It is disappointing, the IPU reports, that women are still less likely than men to hold an economic portfolio or to be a country's top foreign affairs representative.

"The question of women keeps coming back," notes Augustin Wambo, an agriculture policy expert at the NEPAD Secretariat. He argues that noble goals will be meaningless unless those in positions of power are made aware of women's needs.

"No matter how many pledges are made," Mr. Wambo stresses, "unless we empower law-makers to unblock resources from national budgets and put in place the necessary means and policies to support women, the initiative is not going to fly."

Producers and entrepreneurs

NEPAD's Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), completed in 2003, argues that "special attention must be given to the vital food-producing and entrepreneurial roles of women in rural and urban African communities." The CAADP adds, "African women account for substantial amounts of production in both the informal and formal sectors," while women entrepreneurs "not only invest in their business but also place high value on social investments in their communities."

Photo: Martin Roemers

Women dig irrigation canals in Rwanda: NEPAD acknowledges that women play the predominant role in food production.

It is estimated that women produce more than half the food crops in most African countries. Studies by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) have found, however, that despite women's dominant role in food security, contemporary laws and traditional customs make it difficult for them to own land or acquire credit. Women also get only a tiny fraction of the professional training provided by agricultural institutions.

In March 2007, the NEPAD Secretariat organized a Southern African regional conference to brief members of parliament on the role they can play in their constituencies to achieve NEPAD's agriculture goals. The conference emphasized the significance of gender and what can be done to support women farmers.

Networks and think tanks

To ensure that issues affecting women are better reflected in policies and programmes, the NEPAD Secretariat consults with pools of experts across all sectors. In 2005, for example, at a meeting organized by the Kenya-based African Women's Development Communication Network (FEMNET), representatives from over 40 countries called for a mechanism to respond to gender and civil society matters.

As a result of further consultations, the Civil Society Organizations Think Tank, comprising 60 gender experts from all regions of Africa, was created that same year. Its members are experts in NEPAD's various priority themes, such as agriculture, education, transportation and health. These experts work with women on the ground, and thus have a good understanding of what ordinary women most need.

Such willingness to consult gender experts, notes Roselynn Musa, a member of the think tank, shows that African leaders now realize that NEPAD's goals cannot be achieved unless women and girls are able to participate to the best of their abilities. Ms. Musa, a programme officer at FEMNET, believes this is the beginning of a new type of partnership between NEPAD and African women.

"The think tank shows that the NEPAD leaders are aware there was a gap in how they initially planned to do business," Ms. Musa told *Africa Renewal*. "They are now trying to fill that gap." By having a positive impact on daily lives, Ms. Musa adds, NEPAD will become more credible and relevant to African women. ■

Africans fear 'ruin' in Europe trade talks

Opposition grows to more inequitable trade liberalization

By **Gumisai Mutume**

The warnings are grim. Cape Verde may lose 80 per cent of its import revenues. Three-quarters of Ghana's industry may collapse. And African countries could end up even more dependent on trade with Europe than with each other. Such worries about the possible impact of ongoing "free trade" negotiations between Europe and its former colonies in Africa, the Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) are beginning to galvanize public debate in the region.

Reuters - Antony Njuguna

Participants at the World Social Forum in Nairobi, Kenya, protest the European Union's new Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs).

African governments, policy analysts, regional economic groups and civil society organizations are increasingly speaking with one voice: the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) now being hammered out between Europe and the ACP countries must be significantly modified to safeguard those countries' prospects for development.

"If the EPAs are signed as they are, it will be suicide and death for farmers," Jules Zongo, national president of Burkina Faso's regional chambers of agriculture, declared at a protest march and rally of 2,000 farmers in that country's capital, Ouagadougou, in December. Several months earlier, civil society organizations rallied in Senegal, as part of a global Stop EPA campaign, to demand that their government not sign the agreements unless significant changes are made.

African leaders have taken note of such calls. When heads of state from throughout West Africa converged on Ouagadougou for a summit meeting in January 2007, Burkina's President Blaise Compaoré affirmed that the "legitimate concerns" of farmers and other producers must be considered in any trade talks with the European Union (EU).

Among other venues, opposition to the EPAs also featured at the World Social Forum in Nairobi, Kenya, in January, at which tens of thousands of civil society representatives chanted and carried signs declaring: "Fight poverty... Say no to EPAs." In April, the Africa Youth Coalition Against Hunger mobilized more than 1,000 activists from 20 countries in the Gambia to launch a "big noise campaign" to stimulate public debate on the proposed agreements.

Beyond the concrete impact that the new agreements may ultimately have on people's lives, the negotiations are attracting wider attention for another reason: they began at a time when talks to further liberalize global trade, under the so-called Doha round of the World Trade Organization (WTO), seemed stalled.

One factor in the indefinite suspension of the Doha round last year was the reluctance of richer countries to liberalize their agricultural sectors, while at the same time they insisted that developing nations open their own economies even further to products from the North. Some analysts regard the EPA negotiations as an attempt by the more powerful EU to extend to its weaker ACP trading partners, through a different forum, agreements that it could not obtain at the WTO. The 27 countries of the EU have a combined gross domestic product of US$14 bn, while 39 of the 79 ACP nations are among the world's least developed countries (LDCs).

New scenario

Although the Doha round talks have bogged down, earlier changes at the WTO have already seriously affected the nature of the EU's relations with the ACP countries. From 1975 to 1994, the EU and ACP shared special development cooperation arrangements through a series of five-year agreements, originally known as the Lomé Conventions. Through those agreements, the EU granted trade preferences to ACP exports, without requiring similar treatment for EU products in ACP markets.

The so-called Uruguay Round of trade negotiations, which concluded in 1994, adopted new rules requiring parties to regional trade agreements to eliminate

duties and other restrictive regulations on "substantially all the trade" among them. But for some regions application of the rules was postponed, as the WTO, which emerged from the Uruguay talks in 1995, agreed to a special exception allowing the EU to maintain "non-reciprocal" preferences for ACP exporters until December 2007.

With the WTO deadline in mind, in 2000 the two groups signed a new cooperation accord known as the Cotonou Agreement, covering aid, trade and political cooperation. Its aim was to "facilitate the economic and political integration of the ACP countries into a liberalized world market." Its framers also envisaged the conclusion of negotiations on EPAs or other alternative trade arrangements by the start of 2008, to comply with WTO rules. Initial talks on the EPAs began in 2002.

Some developing countries now fear that the EU's approach to such EPAs will oblige them to remove trade protections so quickly and to such an extent that the development of their own industries will be harmed. "At no point in time was an EPA as a free trade agreement the first choice for the ACP," says Mauritius' ambassador to the EU, Sutiawan Gunessee. "It was not. But we had no alternative."

According to Zimbabwean Trade Minister Obert Mpofu, any new trade agreements should reinforce, not undermine, "the development of our economies, employment generation, wealth creation for our people and ultimately poverty reduction."

Ending dependency?

In contrast, EU Trade Commissioner Peter Mandelson views the EPAs as beneficial. He argues that they will shift the relationship between the EU and Africa from one of dependency on tariff preferences to one that promotes business competitiveness. After 30 years of preferential market access, African countries still export a limited range of basic commodities, he points out. "Most of these are sold at lower prices than they were 20 years ago. This is not sustainable. It certainly isn't sustainable development."

Countered Nigerian Commerce Minister Aliyu Modibo Umar: "If 30 years of non-reciprocal free market access into the EU did not improve the economic situation of the ACP, how can a reciprocal trading arrangement achieve anything better?" Instead, he argues, simply liberalizing trade will "further widen the gap between the two [blocs] and probably destroy the little development that some ACP countries have managed to achieve over the past years."

Hard choices

Under the type of EPAs currently proposed by the EU, ACP countries would eventually have to liberalize 80–90 per cent of their trade with the regional bloc in order to gain duty-free access to European markets. That would allow ACP countries to use tariffs to protect only a small portion of their products from competition with European goods.

To stay within that narrow band, governments would have to make some hard choices, notes Oxfam in a 2006 report, *Unequal Partners*. They could choose, for example, to maintain tariffs on valuable revenue-raising imports such as cars and electronics, protect staple foods such as maize, exempt a few existing industries from competition or retain the ability to support future industrial development.

Fiscal losses

In the short term, lifting tariffs on European goods would deprive many governments of an important source of fiscal revenue. "Many countries would lose the valuable income they earn from tariff duties," notes Mr. Godfrey Kanyenze of the Labour and Economic Development Institute of Zimbabwe. Until countries are able to diversify their revenue bases — often a long process — they could be confronted with national budget deficits, possibly leading to lower spending on education, health care, poverty reduction and social security.

A 2002 study by the Common Market for East and Southern Africa, a regional trade bloc, found that if all EU imports entered that region duty-free, governments would lose about 25 per cent of their trade taxes and about 6 per cent of total tax revenue. Another study, by Germany's Hamburg Institute of International Economics, estimated that declines in import duties in countries of the Economic Community of West African States would range from the equivalent of $2.2 mn in Guinea-Bissau to $487.8 mn in Nigeria. The decline would be sharpest in Cape Verde, where 80 per cent of import revenues are likely to be lost. If no adjustments on spending were made, Cape Verde and the Gambia would incur budget deficits of 4.1 and 3.5 per cent respectively.

Such "doomsday" predictions need to be treated with caution, responds EU Trade Commissioner Mandelson. "If we look closely, most studies are highly theoretical," he argues. "They assume immediate and complete liberalization, and ignore the economic benefits of reform." According to Mr. Mandelson, the EU and ACP can negotiate the timing and phasing of tariff reductions to guard against any sharp drops in government income.

The commissioner adds that while some "transitional protection" may be necessary, the aim should be to reduce protection to encourage local industries to become more competitive. Over time, ACP countries will need to adapt their economies to compete with the rest of the world.

'Back door' issues

In principle, the central objective of the Cotonou Agreement is poverty reduction. Both parties agree that whatever arrangements are negotiated, they should foster development in the ACP countries. But they differ on what policies would best serve that purpose, echoing debates that previously unfolded within the WTO.

The EU, for example, is proposing that ACP countries adopt stringent rules to protect foreign investment, promote domestic competition and increase transparency in government procurement procedures. Similar proposals — known as the "Singapore issues" after the WTO ministerial meeting at which they were first raised — were blocked by developing countries, which feared the rules would hinder their ability to use trade policy to promote development (see *Africa Renewal*, January 2004).

But rich countries, following their failure to introduce such issues into WTO agreements, are now trying to insert them into multilateral and bilateral agreements

as conditions for aid or loans, notes Mr. Irungu Houghton of Kenya, a pan-Africa policy analyst for Oxfam. EPAs are one part of this broader effort to bring the Singapore issues in through "the back door," he argues.

In several countries, Mr. Houghton told *Africa Renewal*, "there is intense pressure to open up procurement processes for public contracts and supplies to non-indigenous suppliers, who because of their international reach are able to produce those goods at a much lower cost than local contractors." Such a liberalization of procurement would take away one of the few tools governments have traditionally used to promote local industry — that is, favouring domestic companies ahead of foreign ones.

Mr. Houghton notes that similar changes in government procurement policies are also appearing in Country Assistance Strategies — documents that spell out loan conditions from the continent's main lender, the World Bank.

The implications of adopting all the Singapore issues in Africa have not been fully studied. But policy analysts agree that simply implementing new laws to enact the reforms will by itself be costly. Oxfam estimates that rewriting domestic laws and changing business procedures in each of the 16 areas of reform agreed under the Uruguay Round would cost an average country $2.5 mn.

The European Commission (the secretariat of the EU) insists, however, that there will be "no EPA without investment rules and full reciprocity." The commission argues that "the EPAs are, at root, about putting progressive trade policy into practice," by reducing bad business practices hindering investment in Africa.

'A field of ruins'

But opposition is mounting to the EPAs, as currently envisaged by the EU. In 2004 civil society organizations from across the world rallied in London to launch a Stop EPAs campaign. The campaigners charge that in their current form EPAs are essentially narrow "free trade" agreements intended to further liberalize the markets of ACP countries. They cite examples of earlier trade liberalization measures. In 1986 Côte d'Ivoire cut tariffs by 40 per cent, resulting in massive layoffs in the chemical, textile, footwear and automobile assembly industries. Senegal lost one-third of manufacturing jobs between 1985 and 1990 after reducing tariffs from 165 per cent to 90 per cent. The campaigners are calling for EU-ACP trade relations that support the weaker partners' pursuit of economic development.

Reuters / Antony Njuguna

A market trader in Bamako, Mali, selling African-made textiles: Manufacturers will be hit hard if domestic markets are flooded with European goods.

The organizations endorsing the campaign include the Economic Justice Network in South Africa, Third World Network-Africa in Ghana, Civil Society Trade Network of Zambia, Action Aid and Oxfam International. In a number of African countries, including Burkina Faso, Ghana, Nigeria, Kenya and Senegal, thousands of farmers, workers and civil society activists have staged public protests against the perceived consequences of EPAs.

In April, West African business representatives also voiced alarm. Meeting in Dakar under the auspices of the regional chamber of commerce of the eight-country West African Economic and Monetary Union, they affirmed their readiness to become more competitive in global markets, but not to enter into competition "with unequal arms." Commenting specifically on the EPAs, Mr. Iddi Ango, president of the regional chamber, said that "if we open up our countries, given the current state of our enterprises, it will not be an opportunity, but a disaster, a field of ruins."

Mr. Ibrahim Akalbila, national coordinator of the Ghana Trade and Livelihood Coalition, comprising civil society and farmers' groups in that country, cites the high domestic subsidies that many European governments continue to provide their producers, allowing European products to undersell producers in poor developing countries. "Whether it is tomatoes and rice, textiles or iron rods," he said in April, "cheap imports, illegally dumped into our markets, are destroying whole areas of economic activity, and with it, the lives of millions."

'EPA light'

Some European analysts acknowledge the validity of the ACP criticisms. But they also note that the EU faces a dilemma: how to reconcile the special status of the ACP group with its obligations to the WTO.

One possible solution, they suggest, is for the EU to accept an agreement that is only as reciprocal as necessary to meet WTO requirements, while leaving the ACP countries some room to safeguard their domestic markets and industries. The European Centre for Development

Policy Management, an independent foundation funded by a number of European governments, proposes the adoption of an "EPA light."

Such an arrangement would initially require ACP countries to open up their markets only enough to comply with WTO rules. They would liberalize just 50–60 per cent of their EU trade over a long transitional period of 20 years or more, while the EU would continue to grant full market access to all ACP countries. During the transition, the EU also would support the building of viable industries in ACP countries.

Along similar lines, the UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) argues that the primary focus of EPAs over an initial 12-year period should be to strengthen intra-African trade, to help local industries first become more competitive with their African counterparts. Only after this period, notes the Addis Ababa-based ECA, should EPAs then consider opening African economies to EU competition. And even then, tariff reductions should be phased in gradually, to allow countries time to adjust to the rigours of global markets.

Alternative options

If ACP countries ultimately decide not to sign EPAs, there are a number of other options they could pursue. At the Cotonou meeting in 2000, the EU agreed that if EPAs were not accepted, it would propose "alternative possibilities, in order to provide these countries with a new framework for trade which is equivalent to their existing situation and in conformity with WTO rules." A country, however, would first have to reject an EPA before work could begin on an alternative.

One such option would be to develop new trade arrangements agreeable to both sides. For example, notes Action Aid, the EU could continue offering ACP countries preferential access to European markets while allowing them to protect their vital industries or cut tariffs in ways that do not jeopardize their economic development goals. But such provisions would require changes to current WTO rules on regional trade agreements. With the Cotonou deadline looming and the Doha round talks still suspended, that option seems unlikely.

Therefore, both parties may have to rely on existing trade regimes. One of these is the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP): nonreciprocal market-access schemes open to all developing countries that meet certain standards in human and labour rights, environmental protection and good governance.

The European Commission acknowledges that the GSP alternative would be a "second best" solution, from the development perspective of the ACP countries. A GSP arrangement is not negotiated, like a contract. The EU would design it and offer it on its own terms, and could amend or suspend it at any time. The products covered would not include all those of interest to ACP countries. And if an ACP country were to develop a new product not on the list, that item would be excluded.

Unloading grain at the port of Dakar, Senegal: Africa worries that Europe is trying to bring in new trade issues that have not been agreed at the World Trade Organization.

Nations classified as least developed countries — 39 out of the 77 countries currently taking part in the EPA negotiations — could benefit from one of the variants within the GSP framework, the "Everything But Arms" initiative. It grants LDCs nonreciprocal duty-free and quota-free access to the EU for all goods except arms and munitions.

Non-LDCs could also decide to seek GSP treatment, but they would not be eligible for full duty-free access to the EU market. Moreover, GSP arrangements are narrower in scope than EPAs or the current ACP-EU agreement, since they cover only market access. Unlike the Lomé or Cotonou agreements, they do not include any development assistance, in the form of either financial aid or technical cooperation. GSP rules are also considered more restrictive and onerous than those of the Lomé/Cotonou agreements: hence the reluctance of ACP countries to rely solely on them.

Some civil society organizations argue that in a worst-case scenario, GSPs could be used as a starting framework for a new trade arrangement, but with their flaws corrected to provide both market access and development assistance to ACP countries.

Because of the controversy, the British Parliament held public consultations on the EPAs in 2005. Subsequently, its parliamentary committee on international development recommended that the UK push the EU to ensure that alternatives for non-LDC ACP states guarantee the same level of market access as the Lomé arrangements. "Development," it concluded, "should be integral to any trade options presented to the ACP, even when they are not the first choice of the EU." ■

Climate change: Africa gets ready

Planning how to deal with higher temperatures, shifting weather

By **Michael Fleshman**

It was not an easy life. But for fisherman Mohammadu Bello and his nine children the shallow waters of Lake Chad, a vast body of fresh water at the intersection of Niger, Chad, Nigeria and Cameroon, at least provided a living. Sales of lake catfish were brisk at the Doron Baga fish market, sustaining his family. But no more. Over the past 30 years the lake has steadily retreated from its former shores, leaving Mr. Bello and his neighbours high and dry and raising the prospect that the lake — once one of Africa's largest — could vanish entirely. "Some 27 years ago when I started fishing on the lake," he told the British Broadcasting Corporation in January, "we used to catch fish as large as a man." Now, he said, the fish are small and what little is available is trucked into the market over the dry lakebed.

The causes of the lake's shrinking, say scientists and researchers, include its increased use for irrigation and drinking. But more important, they say, are changes in the region's climate, which have reduced the rainfall that once kept the lake and its feeder rivers full. These changes, which are occurring in every part of the world, are now widely understood to be caused by human activities, particularly those that use pollution-producing oil and other fossil fuels such as industrial processes, electricity generation and motor cars. Gases created by such activities are building up in the atmosphere, trapping too much of the sun's heat and raising the earth's temperature — a process known as *global warming*. As the earth heats up, it alters rainfall and other weather and climate patterns, threatening human, animal and plant life with potentially calamitous *climate change*.

The science is a bit abstract for fishermen like Mohammadu Bello, but the impact is not. "I don't know what global warming is," he said. "But what I do know is that this lake is dying and we are all dying with it."

In fact, Mr. Bello has found ways to cope. He and his family now till the rich soil left behind by the vanishing lake, growing vegetables for the Doron Baga market. He has acquired the skills and tools needed for his new profession as a farmer. But prospects for the 20 million people who depend on the lake and its rivers for water are less certain, and plans to divert water from other rivers into Lake Chad remain on the shelf for want of funding.

As the world prepares for the inescapable effects of global warming and seeks ways to reduce the emissions that cause it, Mr. Bello's struggle to adapt will be shared by untold millions of people around the world. It is a challenge that looms particularly large in Africa.

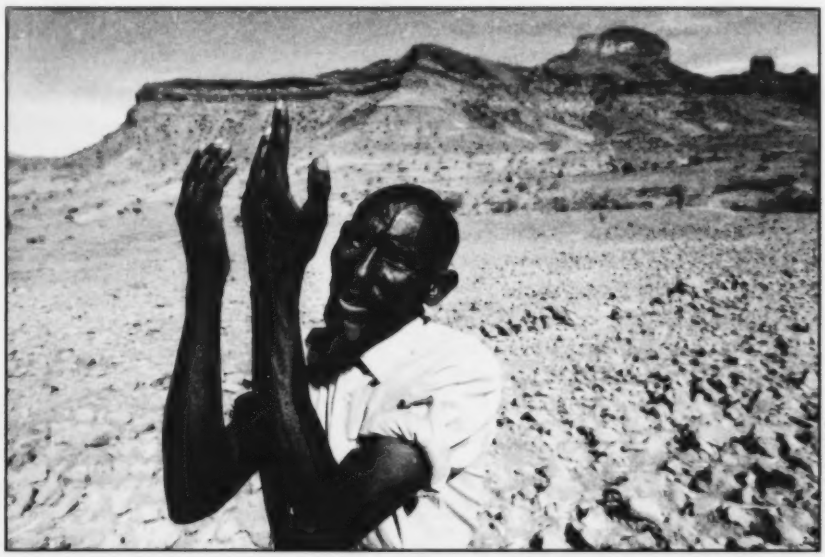


Photo: Sven Torfinn

Ethiopian farmer Teshoma Abera laments the absence of rainfall and the failure of his crops.

Global warming, local impact

After a divisive and decades-long debate over the causes and potential impact of global warming, a series of studies by 2,500 scientists from 130 countries, part of the United Nations-sponsored Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), has finally laid the issue to rest. In February 2007 the IPCC provided overwhelming scientific evidence that the use of fossil fuels like coal, oil and natural gas is releasing billions of tonnes of heat-trapping "greenhouse" gases into the atmosphere every year, causing air, ground and ocean temperatures around the world to rise at an alarming rate.

Countries can reduce harmful emissions and halt warming, noted IPCC Chairman Rajendra Pachauri in April, by investing in cleaner "green" technologies and changing consumer habits. But it is too late to prevent climate change from having sometimes severe impacts on the planet, and "it is the poorest of the poor in the world, and this includes poor people even in prosperous societies, who are going to be the worst hit."

Africa, the poorest and least developed of the world's regions, will be especially hard-pressed to adjust. Although sub-Saharan Africa produces less than 4 per cent of the world's greenhouse gases, scientists predict with "very high confidence" — as close as scientists get to saying they are certain — that the region's diverse climates and ecological systems have already been altered by global warming and will undergo further damage in the years ahead.

Among the most worrying effects of global warming is the impact on water supply. Africa is fortunate to have large reserves of untapped water and some dry areas are likely to benefit from increased rain, but the Sahel and other arid and semi-arid regions are expected to become even drier. A third of Africa's people already live in drought-prone regions and climate changes could put the lives and livelihoods of an additional 75–250 million people at risk by the end of the next decade. Flood-prone areas in Southern Africa, on the other hand, are likely to become wetter as rainfall patterns shift, causing floods to become more frequent and severe and diverting resources from development to emergency relief.

Alamy Images / Roger Hutchings

While some parts of Africa will get less rain, other areas will experience greater flooding.

Farming, coastlines at risk

Africa's agricultural sector is already hampered by its reliance on rain-fed irrigation, poor soils and antiquated technology and farming methods. It is likely to be hit hard as droughts and flooding worsen, temperatures and growing seasons change, and farmers and herders are forced off their land.

This could spell humanitarian and economic disaster on a continent where farming accounts for 70 per cent of employment and is often the engine for national economies — generating export earnings, industrial raw materials and inexpensive food. In some countries, scientists project, farmers will harvest just 50 per cent of current yields by 2020. The important fishing industry, as Mohammadu Bello's situation reveals, is also likely to suffer as lakes and rivers dry up and rising water temperatures destroy commercial species of fish.

Coastlines and islands around the world are threatened by rising ocean levels as warming temperatures melt the earth's polar icecaps. But East Africa's low-lying islands and coastal regions are at particular risk of frequent flooding or becoming permanently submerged.

Higher water temperatures are expected to increase the power and frequency of hurricanes and other violent ocean storms. Africa's coastal fisheries and the fragile ecosystems that support them could also be damaged if higher sea levels push salt water inland and destroy freshwater estuaries and coastal farmland.

'Environmentally displaced'

As life becomes more difficult, the UN estimates, as many as 50 million "environmentally displaced" people around the world could join the exodus of migrants already crossing borders and oceans in search of new livelihoods. Many will move into overcrowded cities that today strain to provide jobs, housing and basic services, and will themselves be under threat from the effects of climate change.

Climate change will also affect parasites like the tsetse fly and parasitic diseases

Security Council: climate change may threaten peace

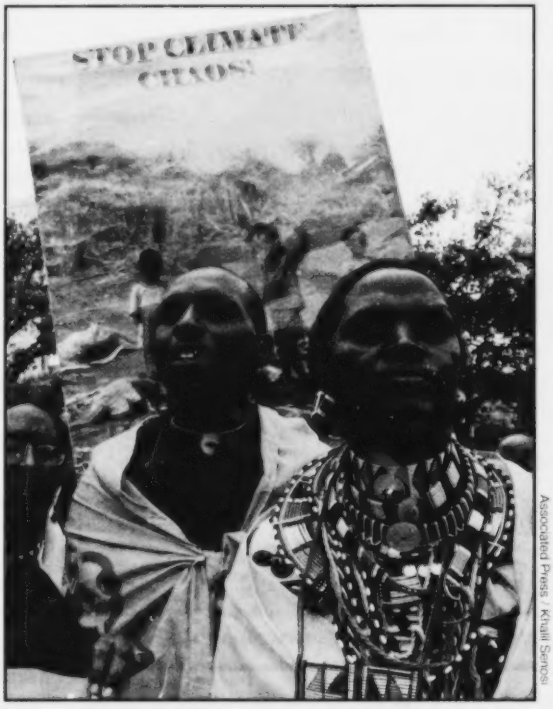
The economic, political and social consequences of climate change could threaten world peace unless the world acts to prevent it, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon told the Security Council on 17 April. "Throughout human history people have fought over natural resources," he noted. "Changing weather patterns, such as floods and droughts and related economic costs ... could risk polarizing society and marginalizing communities," thereby increasing the risk of conflict and violence.

The unusual day-long session, an initiative of the UK, marked the first time the Council addressed climate change. Its presence on the agenda was not without critics. Pakistan's Ambassador Farukh Amil, speaking on behalf of the influential G-77 and China group of developing countries, argued that the topic was outside the Security Council's mandate and an encroachment on the authority of larger and more representative bodies, including the General Assembly and the UN Economic and Social Council. But the session was welcomed by other speakers, including those from small island states facing the prospect of inundation from rising sea levels.

The meeting was chaired by UK Foreign Secretary Margaret Beckett, who said, "Today is about the world recognizing that there is a security imperative, as well as economic, developmental and environmental ones, to tackling climate change." Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni, she noted, has already described climate change as "an act of aggression" by the polluting industrial North against the developing South — a comment that underscored the link between the environment and world peace. "He is one of the first leaders to see this problem in security terms," she asserted. "He will not be the last."

such as malaria. Malaria is the single greatest killer of African children and imposes a $12 bn annual drain on African economies through death, medical costs and lost productivity. The mosquitoes that spread it thrive within a relatively narrow range of temperature and moisture, and some infected areas may become malaria free as they become drier. Yet simultaneously, regions currently outside the malaria zone may become infested as they get hotter and wetter. The World Health Organization has warned that globally, as many as 80 million more people could become infected as malaria spreads among populations lacking both natural protection against the disease and awareness of prevention and treatment methods.

Nor will Africa's diverse plant and animal populations be spared. A study of nearly 5,200 plant species throughout the continent found that about 5,000 of them would lose much of their natural habitat to climate change. Of these, some 2,100 could lose all of their native habitat by 2085. Wildlife will fare no better. In South Africa's famous Kruger game reserve, for example, studies show that two-thirds of animal species could disappear.



Associated Press / Khalil Senosi

Demonstrators in Nairobi, Kenya, protest failure of developed countries to curb emissions of gases that contribute to global warming.

Adapting to climate change

African leaders, aware of the continent's vulnerability, have long supported international efforts to combat global warming and climate change. African governments were prime movers behind the 1994 UN convention to combat desertification — a particular concern on a continent where two-thirds of the land is arid or semi-arid. Many African countries also were early signatories to the 1992 UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the 1997 Kyoto Protocol, the first and to date only international treaty setting binding limits on pollution emissions.

But because Africa's small industrial base and limited transport system and power grid generates comparatively few greenhouse gases, reducing emissions has not been the region's top priority. Instead African governments, civil society and their development partners are focused on planning for the coming climate shocks and assisting vulnerable communities to adapt. In September 2006, for example, the UNFCCC secretariat convened a workshop on climate-change adaptation attended by 33 African governments and a number of international agencies and civil society groups. The meeting highlighted the need for greater monitoring and early warning of climate changes and severe weather events like droughts and floods, and called for integration of long-term adaptation strategies into development and disaster-preparedness programmes.

Indeed, many aspects of Africa's development agenda strengthen the ability of communities and countries to cope with climate change. Irrigation schemes, for example, are a vital component of efforts to improve food security and raise farm incomes in many parts of Africa. Only about 4 per cent of Africa's farmland is irrigated. Bringing water to more acreage figures prominently in agricultural development plans. As seasonal rains become more erratic and less frequent due to climate change, irrigation also becomes an important adaptive strategy -- helping farmers keep their livelihoods, increasing the food supply and allowing rural communities to remain on the land.

The problem, Sierra Leonean climate scientist Ogunlade Davidson told *Africa Renewal* from his Freetown office, is finance. "Climate change will have a major impact on agriculture in Africa," he said. "Africa will have to change its agricultural systems. But if [Africa] doesn't have enough money, it can't," since irrigation, fertilizers, improved technology and better seeds all require expensive investments. "Africa never enjoyed the financial benefits generated by putting greenhouse gases up there in the first place," he continued, "so it never accumulated the wealth to be able to bear the shocks." Because they now have to cope with the effects of a situation they did not create with resources they do not have, he noted, global warming is "a double loser for countries in Africa."

'Time for implementation'

Africa is receiving some assistance through two funds operated by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), a funding agency established in 1991 to assist developing countries finance environmental protection projects. The Least Developed Countries Fund is only for those countries classified as LDCs, while the Special Climate Change Fund supports adaptation, energy management, technology transfer and climate-related economic diversification projects in all developing countries. Since its launch in 2001 the LDC fund has attracted almost $116 mn in pledges, less than half of which has so far been received. Pledges to the special fund total $62 mn, over $52 mn of which has arrived.

Participating governments in consultation with the private sector and civil society develop National Adaptation Plans of Action (NAPAs) which identify vulnerabilities and needs and set country-specific priorities for action. Projects emerging out of the NAPA process are then eligible for funding. The GEF is administered by the UN

Peter Arnold Inc. / BIOS Gunther Michel

Africa's vast forests help absorb harmful gases in the atmosphere, and governments are working to slow excessive logging and other practices that contribute to deforestation.

Environment Programme, the World Bank and the UN Development Programme.

Ethiopia has now received $1 mn from the special fund towards a $3 mn programme to conduct pilot projects in the arid northern half of the country aimed at halting soil erosion. The project also seeks to strengthen the ability of pastoralists and farmers to cope with drought. Kenya has received $6.5 mn towards a $51 mn project to build national, provincial and community capacity to recognize and manage climate change and promote private sector involvement in climate-change adaptation.

The problem with the grants, says Mr. Davidson, a specialist in energy and the co-chair of the IPCC report on reducing global greenhouse gas emissions, is that they are too small to have a dramatic impact on threatened communities. Until very recently, he observed, international climate-change funding focused largely on scientific research into the causes and mitigation of global warming rather than on local adaptation programmes: "Take energy. If you upgrade to cleaner energy technology it will take considerable investment — more than a country would make otherwise. Who will pay that additional cost?"

The need to answer that question is one reason that a global commitment to combat climate change is important, Mr. Davidson said, "because it is the international community that can come up with the means. But if we put a long list of bureaucratic obstacles and conditionalities on it, those countries will not be in a position of accessing those funds and the problem will persist." The time for studies and pilot projects is over, he asserted. "Now is the time for implementation."

NEPAD's plan: green growth

Whether those resources will be made available, however, is an open question. Africa has struggled for decades to find the capital needed for poverty reduction, and has fallen far short. Critics point out that despite Northern promises to boost development assistance to Africa and other developing regions to ease poverty and achieve the modest quality-of-life improvements set out in the Millennium Development Goals (see *Africa Renewal*, July 2005), aid actually decreased last year by over 5 per cent.

Carbon dioxide emissions
metric tonnes per capita, in 2000

World	3.8
Europe/Central Asia	6.6
Mideast/North Africa	3.2
Latin America/Caribbean	2.5
E. Asia/Pacific	2.0
South Asia	1.0
Sub-Saharan Africa	**0.7**
OECD	12.7
LDCs	0.2
Highest (US)	20.5
Lowest (Chad)	0.0

Carbon dioxide accounts for three-quarters of "greenhouse" gases.

Source: UN Africa Renewal from World Bank data.

It is little wonder then, that the environmental action plan in Africa's continental development blueprint, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), begins with the observation that "Africa is characterized by two interrelated features: rising poverty levels and deepening environmental degradation."

The action plan, developed in 2003 with the assistance of the UN Environment Programme, notes that "throughout Africa, poverty remains the main cause and consequence of environmental degradation and resource depletion.... For African countries alleviating poverty is the overriding goal and priority of their development policies.... Without significant improvement in the living and livelihoods of the poor, environmental policies and programmes will achieve little success."

The action plan emphasizes local, national and sub-regional responses to environmental degradation, improved environmental monitoring and research, and more effective international partnerships to promote "green" technology transfer, improve disaster preparedness and early warning systems and ease the consequences of climate change on the most vulnerable.

Because Africa contributes so little to planetary warming, the NEPAD programme on climate change stresses the region's contribution to slowing the rise of global temperatures. Among the most important factors in the slowdown are its forests, which absorb and trap the carbon dioxide gas that is a principal contributor to warming. Africa contains 17 per cent of the earth's remaining forestland and fully a quarter of its dense rain forests, which clean the atmosphere of emissions caused by polluters thousands of miles away. The forests also support an astonishing diversity of plant and animal life, an estimated 1.5 mn different species, which in turn provide sustenance for many millions of people.

Forests dwindling

But Africa's forests are now vanishing at a rate of over 5 mn hectares per year, NEPAD reports, casualties of wasteful and unsustainable commercial logging and "slash and burn" clearing for agriculture. Almost two-thirds of all energy generated in Africa comes from firewood, particularly for household cooking and heating, which adds to the pressure on existing woodlands.

Although Africa and the international community have stepped up efforts to protect and restore forests in recent years, the results have been limited. Between 1980 and 1995, researchers note, some 66 mn hectares of forests have been destroyed. And despite initiatives like Kenya's Green Belt movement, a grassroots women's campaign that has planted 10 mn trees since 1977, the rate of deforestation is increasing.

NEPAD's action plan argues that enacting and enforcing sustainable logging laws and reducing agricultural demand for forest land by improving yields on existing farms are critical aspects of any successful programme to protect Africa's forests. But it is not easy. Logs are an important export commodity for some countries, and reducing exports could create budget shortfalls that may be difficult or impossible to fill. Boosting agricultural production and farm incomes is a NEPAD priority, but reforming Africa's rural economy is a costly and long-term project and progress has been too slow to halt the addition of 1 million people each year to the ranks of the hungry.

In late May 2007, the NEPAD Secretariat announced that detailed climate-change responses for each of the continent's subregions had been developed by a consortium of 800 African environmental, conservation and economic experts for consideration by African environment ministers. Those studies will form part of the presentation African heads of state will make at the next UNFCCC meeting in Bali at the end of the year.

Greening the market

The challenge of meshing urgent environmental needs with stubborn economic realities is particularly pressing in Africa, but it is scarcely unique to the continent. The expense of reducing greenhouse emissions has been a major obstacle to action against climate change over the past decade, even for rich countries. While scientists generally argue that it is cheaper to cut emissions now and prevent the worst effects of climate change, some governments argue for slower and smaller reductions, pointing to the cost to industry and consumers and the risk of damaging the global economy.

In a major study of the economics of climate change for the UK in 2006, Sir Nicholas Stern, a former chief economist for the World Bank, argued that the nature of free markets prevent them from being naturally greener. It works like this: The financial benefit of manufacturing a tonne of steel is enjoyed by a small number of people — the mill owners, workers and shareholders. But the cost, when measured in greenhouse emissions and environmental damage, is distributed over billions of people around the world over many generations. This provides little incentive to the mill owners to raise their production costs to reduce pollution. "Climate change," noted Dr. Stern "is the greatest market failure the world has ever seen."

"Climate change is the greatest market failure the world has ever seen."

— Sir Nicholas Stern, former World Bank chief economist

Changing the economic processes by raising the cost of pollution is therefore important if global efforts to halt global warming are to succeed. One proposal is to tax greenhouse gas emissions, thereby making it cheaper to prevent them than to generate them. But "carbon taxes" have encountered strong opposition in many countries and have been adopted by only a handful of governments.

A different way to put a price on pollution, called "cap and trade" schemes, has proven more popular since the Kyoto Protocol came into effect. Kyoto requires industrial country signatories to reduce greenhouse gases by about 5 per cent from 1990 levels. The agreement also established the UNFCCC's Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), which allows heavily polluting industries to, in effect, buy pollution rights from a country with low emissions by investing in green projects there.

If, for example, the theoretical steel mill owners are required by their Kyoto-compliant government to reduce their carbon emissions by 10 tonnes, they can invest in improved anti-pollution and manufacturing technology to meet that target. But the mill owners may find it cheaper to plant enough trees in Africa to absorb 10 tonnes of carbon pollution instead. Under the CDM, the mill owners are permitted to count the carbon trapped in the new trees against their reduction target, saving them money and creating incentives to invest in the continent.

The same rules would apply to a project to replace a polluting coal-fired power plant in Africa with one producing cleaner hydro or natural gas power, allowing Northern investors to count the reduction in power plant emissions in Africa against their domestic reduction requirements. The agreement even allows CDM "carbon credits" to be bought and sold in much the same way that corporate stocks are traded.

Since it was first suggested at the end of 1997, carbon trading has developed into a $22 bn industry. Africa hoped to capitalize on its low emissions to attract CDM investments and help finance green development. But to date Africa has attracted less than 2 per cent of CDM projects worldwide, owing to the absence of sophisticated financial and marketing institutions and limited administrative and management capacity.

The programme has proven controversial for other reasons as well, with critics arguing that wealthy countries and businesses use the mechanism to avoid reducing their emissions and cheat on their Kyoto obligations by inflating the environmental value of their offsetting projects.

But with the Kyoto agreement set to expire in 2012 and evidence mounting that the earth is heating faster than expected, Africa's green development agenda may yet benefit from efforts to change the economics of global warming. "We have a very short window for turning around the trend we have in rising greenhouse gas emissions," the IPCC's Rajendra Pachauri told reporters in Bangkok in May. "We don't have the luxury of time." ■

Coping with less rain in Burkina Faso

Officials, farmers and activists gear up for climate change battle

By **Jean Marie Sawadogo**
Ouagadougou

The heat wave that started in March has not yet, two months later, given way to the first rainfall of the new farming season, except in a few isolated parts of Burkina Faso. Abel Raogo, a 60-year-old farmer in the village of Ipelcé, some 50 kilometres from the capital, has already finished sowing his fields. Now he waits for the rain.

"The good, generous years — when farming could begin in April thanks to early, plentiful and lasting rains — are long behind us," he remarks, sitting in his field in the shade of a shea tree. "Forty years ago, we weren't tormented by constant anxiety and uncertainty, worried about poor harvests, like we are today."

Hamadou Tamboura farms and raises livestock near Sapouy, in a neighbouring province. He moved there five years ago from the arid Sahel region in Burkina's north. "I decided to move to Sapouy to escape the hard conditions of the Sahel's hostile environment and seriously degraded land," he explained to *Africa Renewal*. But now his land in Sapouy has become exhausted and no longer produces enough.

Raogo and Tamboura toil in different areas. Each faces his own particular situation. But they are both aware that the conditions they confront are no longer what they once were. The two farmers have seen the reality of the changing weather, although they are not sure of the reasons. They do not ask for explanations of "climate change." That concept features mainly in national and international intellectual debates. They do understand the immediate dangers represented by degrading soils, drying rivers and other changes in their environment — and they want urgent, concrete solutions to those problems.

Vulnerability

Burkina's economy is based mainly on agriculture, which provides livelihoods for 80 per cent of the population. Natural constraints, such as degraded soils, recurrent droughts, deforestation and spreading deserts, have a major impact. They combine to make people's lives more vulnerable.

Over the past four decades, Burkina has experienced frequent extremes of climate. Drought in the 1970s caused a serious famine, which cost numerous lives and major livestock losses. Although famine has been less severe since then, it remains a frequent spectre in parts of the country.

Over the decades, Burkina's desert areas have been spreading, a process known as "desertification." Scientists find it difficult to separate desertification from climate change. There is evidence that desertification influences local climate patterns, while climate variations in turn affect the process of desertification.

In a 2006 study, the National Council for Environment and Sustainable Development, an inter-ministerial coordinating body that also includes independent experts and civil society representatives, identified four sectors that are most vulnerable to climate change: water, agriculture, stock raising and forestry.

Lower rainfall and higher temperatures have contributed to the silting and evaporation of lakes and rivers and a long-term decline in the capacity of water reservoirs. In the Central Plateau region, according to government figures, three-quarters of the 84 dams and reservoirs are silted and require rehabilitation. Farmers report that some dams and reservoirs no longer hold enough water during the dry season to enable them to produce crops.

Planting trees along a stone line to prevent soil erosion from heavy downpours of rain.

Albert Bouda grows vegetables in fields irrigated by the Goué dam, near Ouagadougou. Now, to keep on farming, he told *Africa Renewal*, "we have to dig wells to get enough water for our crops."

Higher temperatures lead to more evaporation from water bodies, and also degrade the quality of soil, contribute to the spread from the north of certain agricultural pests such as locusts, lower crop yields and reduce biodiversity. Agricultural experts estimate that 30 per cent of Burkina's land suffers from serious degradation.

The eastern and southwestern parts of the country, which are rich in natural resources and generally have more favourable weather, are increasingly hit by

high temperatures and pockets of drought. Human activities — excessive cutting of trees, overgrazing by livestock and more intensive farming — also contribute to environmental deterioration.

In the east, "we see the start of growing pressure on the land, especially around strategic resources such as protected conservation areas, rivers and lakes," notes Antoinette Ouédraogo, president of a women's development association and a member of a national climate change experts' group. Those pressures, she told *Africa Renewal*, include the uncontrolled clearing of land, poaching of wildlife and migration of livestock, as herders from the north search for new pastures. Such environmentally harmful practices worsen the impact of climate change.

Peter Arnold Inc. / Gen Christian

Drawing water in rural Burkina Faso: The government is helping villagers dig wells and build small water reservoirs to better utilize the country's scarce water resources.

Ironically, the north, which usually has Burkina's lowest average rainfall levels, has in recent years sometimes experienced unexpectedly heavy rains. In August 2006, for example, a downpour in Oudalan province caused serious flooding, with widespread property damage. Meanwhile, sandstorms, which normally hit only the northern parts of the country, now affect other regions as well.

Adaptation plan

In 1992, Burkina was one of the early signers of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, which was negotiated that same year. At the end of 2006, an interdisciplinary group of experts, working under the authority of the Ministry of the Environment, drew up a National Adaptation Plan of Action (NAPA), designed to initiate concrete responses to the challenges of climate change. The plan has been adopted by the government.

Drafted in consultation with civil society organizations and community representatives, the NAPA is intended to identify immediate needs and projects to help local communities confront the adverse effects of climate change.

"Even though the situation in Burkina is not today catastrophic," explains Mamadou Honadia, a member of the NAPA coordinating committee and Burkina's former national focal point for the UN convention, "there are grounds for concern and to take action to mobilize the necessary financial and human resources to address the impact of this phenomenon."

As it is conceived, the NAPA will be used not only to counter the current negative impacts of climate change, but also to anticipate their consequences and the rise of new threats. National experts expect average temperatures to increase by 0.8 per cent by 2025 and by 1.7 per cent by 2050. Meanwhile, average annual rainfall could decline by 3.4 per cent by 2025 and by 7.3 per cent by 2050.

"Lower rainfall, combined with higher temperatures, will have negative repercussions on overall agricultural production and on the vegetation cover because of diminished surface and underground water resources," says the plan. "Satisfying the water needs of people, livestock and crops will be difficult, given that water capacities are weak."

Because the challenges are huge and the available resources are limited, observes the plan, successfully countering the adverse impacts of climate change will require the involvement of all national actors, from the government down to local communities. It will also require adequate assistance from the international community, to support the country's own efforts.

Reservoirs, trees and seeds

Whether it is against the impact of climate change or environmental degradation more generally, the government has already initiated action on a variety of fronts. In his annual "state of the nation" address to parliament in late March, then Prime Minister Paramanga Ernest Yonli cited a number of actions over the past year alone:

- Developing small-scale irrigation projects on 26,000 hectares of land and training thousands of farmers in irrigation techniques and water management, as part of a decade-long plan to promote irrigated farming
- Starting or completing construction of more than two dozen medium-sized dams and water reservoirs
- "Adapting to climate change" by extending an experimental project, known as the Saaga programme, to seed clouds in the arid Sahelian zones
- Producing more than 8 mn tree seedlings to replant 13,000 hectares of land
- Building more than 1,660 kilometres of "living hedges" as wind breaks
- Rehabilitating nearly 4,000 hectares of degraded land
- Fixing sand dunes over nearly 350 hectares in the Sahel
- Encouraging farmers to adopt improved and hardy new seed varieties that require less water, such as high-yielding cassava and the New

Rice for Africa (Nerica).

Many civil society groups and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are active around environmental issues in Burkina. They help train farmers to conserve water, topsoil and vegetation and introduce practices that both preserve the environment and increase yields.

According to Henriette Ouédraogo, president of the Ragussi Association, a group of 60 women shea butter producers active in the central region, her group seeks to raise women's awareness of the risks of cutting trees and the hazards of using certain kinds of chemical pesticides and fertilizers. The association also promotes the conservation of shea trees and other plants that can provide farmers with additional sources of income.

Dialogue and partnerships

To share experiences and help coordinate their areas of work, many of these environmental groups have formed the Network of NGOs and Associations for the Protection of the Environment (ROAPE). Its coordinator, Paul Bayili, believes that civil society has a key role to play in raising public awareness of climate change and in developing responses. "ROAPE has set itself the goal of popularizing the concept, with government support," Mr. Bayili told *Africa Renewal*.

In March, the ROAPE organized a regional workshop on climate change with the aim of defining a strategy to counter its negative effects. Participants recognized the importance of raising the awareness not only of the general public, but also of elected officials, decision-makers and managers of urban zones and forest preserves.

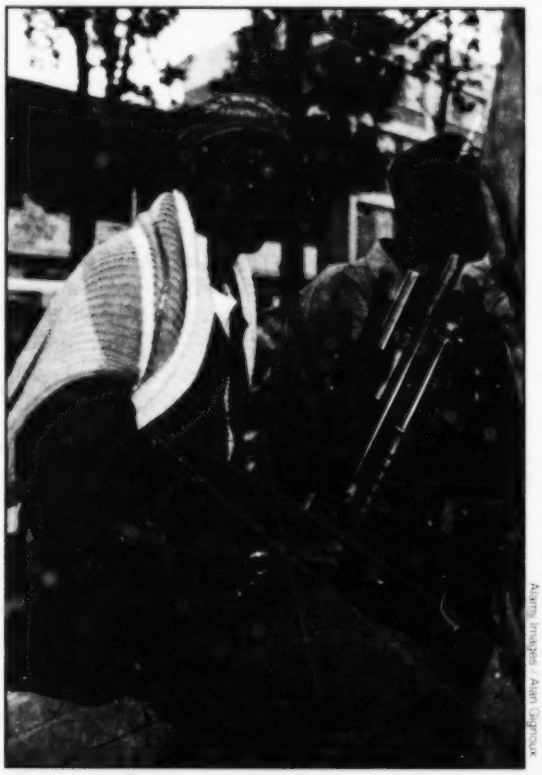
According to Mr. Honadia, of the NAPA coordinating committee, partnerships with the government and such NGOs, as well as with technical experts, rural producers and donor agencies, are essential for confronting Burkina's environmental challenges.

"Dialogue is needed," he told *Africa Renewal*. Through building partnerships, it will be possible to develop projects that benefit from on-the-ground experience and involve all actors. In that way, no one will be pushed to the margins, and "everyone can agree to move forward." ■

Organized crime

from page 3

grammes. In turn, unbalanced or inadequately planned development contributes to criminality, resulting in a vicious cycle of poverty-crime-poverty. Crime threatens security of life and property, the growth of democracy and good governance and the free exercise of human rights.



Alamy Images/ Alan Gignoux

Policeman in Rwanda: Many African police forces need to be better trained, equipped and financed to tackle the challenges of organized crime and smuggling.

Crime also leads to the loss of scarce assets and resources. Although current data is scarce, the South African police estimated in 1998 that the country was losing more than $3 bn annually in potential revenue as a result of the operations of more than 30 Asian, Italian, Nigerian and Russian crime groups in the country.

Angola, another country recovering from conflict, is one of many in Africa that are losing millions of dollars' worth of national resources that could be ploughed into development. The Southern African nation attracted scores of transnational crime syndicates during its decades-long civil war as the rebel National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) traded diamonds and other natural resources to fund its war against the government. When the war ended in 2002, some of its fighters switched from military activities to transnational crime.

"The loss of money through these crimes is a serious issue for the region because the money is lost by countries which can least afford to be without those kinds of resources," says Mr. Charles Goredema of the Institute for Security Studies in South Africa. In Southern Africa, when gold and diamonds are smuggled, no taxes are paid on those commodities, depriving the state of resources it could otherwise use to finance basic services.

Public perceptions of high levels of crime or corruption in a country almost always dissuade potential investors. In its *Crime and Development in Africa* report, UNODC noted that investment levels in Africa are lower than they could be due to a perception that the rule of law does not prevail on the continent. In 2003, Africa's share of foreign direct investment was just 8.7 per cent of the $172 bn received by all developing countries. The levels are low despite the fact that investment returns are much higher in Africa than in other developing regions.

Fighting the scourge

One way in which governments can fight the scourge of organized crime is by strengthening domestic laws to deter criminals from using those countries as transit points. When it emerged from conflict in 2002, Angola had no policy specifically designed to combat organized crime. The government argued that it had devoted all its resources to military defence. But

with war over, it is now strengthening its domestic laws.

Even in more stable countries such as Uganda, inadequate legislation can hinder the fight against transnational crime syndicates. "Because of the weak laws we have in Uganda, traffickers find it convenient to transit through Uganda," says Deputy Director of Criminal Investigations Okoth Ochola. "The current law, the National Drug Policy and Authority Act, is too lenient. If you are convicted under that act, you are either sent to prison for one year or you pay a fine of not more than one million shillings," or about US$570. Therefore drug traffickers, who make millions of dollars, would rather risk being convicted in Uganda than in countries where the penalties are stiffer. And, Mr. Ochola adds, five years have passed since a draft bill to strengthen the law was circulated, but it has not yet been tabled in parliament.

With the assistance of the UN, some countries, including Guinea-Bissau, are carrying out security sector reforms to strengthen policing. In October 2006, the country set up a national commission to combat the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. But the government does not have enough funds to devote to the sector. The West African nation of 1.6 million people does not even have a standard high-security prison.

According to UNODC Executive Director Costa, Guinea-Bissau needs support from international funding agencies to buy police equipment, vehicles and communications systems. "If support is not forthcoming," he says, "I fear that honest police offices could become discouraged. This country must not be allowed to become a narco-state."

Continental strategy

Across West and Central Africa, governments' responses to transnational organized crime have been limited mostly to updating national legislation and legal frameworks to comply with UN conventions and protocols, notes Mr. Antonio Mazzitelli of UNODC's regional office.

So far, Mr. Mazzitelli says, that approach has yielded mixed results. "Concrete and courageous cleaning-up efforts, such as the anti-corruption campaign implemented by President Obasanjo's government in Nigeria, should certainly produce dramatic results — if sustained long enough to ignite a virtuous cycle."

Mr. Christophe Compaoré, coordinator of the Committee Against Illicit Drug Trafficking in Burkina Faso, argues that there "is an urgent need for all national bodies against drug trafficking in the subregion to meet and cooperate well, to stop this scourge and dismantle the networks." He warns that a drug transit route is opening up in the west and southwest of his country, fed by a growing network in the region. In April, police in Burkina intercepted $10 mn worth of cocaine on the border with Mali.

Countries also need to support regional institutions to effectively tackle the cross-border challenges presented by organized crime. One such body is the UN African Institute for the Prevention of Crime, established in 1989. Throughout its existence, the agency has operated with inadequate funding and, as a result, has often failed to carry out some of its substantive functions.

Another effort hindered by lack of adequate resources is the 2006-2010 African Programme of Action to fight crime. It was endorsed by members of the African Union following a conference organized by UNODC in Abuja, Nigeria, in 2005. It is a framework for technical cooperation and donor assistance to reduce the impact of crime and drugs on security and development in Africa. Some of its specific programmes include reforming criminal justice systems and developing measures to prevent money laundering, corruption and drug trafficking.

"Drug trafficking is a global issue, with a devastating impact on the well-being of the world community," states Kenyan Assistant Health Minister Wilfred Machage. Progress in fighting the scourge will depend on greater funding, continuous disruption of drug cultivation, distribution, trafficking and marketing networks, and collaboration with regional and international law enforcement agencies, he says.

However, if left unchecked, the INCB warns in its 2006 annual report, "the problem of drug trafficking in Africa might further exacerbate existing social, economic and political problems." Under such circumstances, weak states will only get weaker, fuelling an already growing problem. ■

Violence against women

from page 7

fied in beating his wife if she used a family planning method without his consent.

In Uganda, the Centre for Domestic Violence Prevention works with 73 community volunteers, balanced roughly equally between women and men. They use street theatre to generate support for local laws on domestic violence. Male activists also engage men, to emphasize that nonviolence benefits the whole family, not only women.

In Tanzania, the NGO Kivulini uses open-air meetings, local drama groups, traditional drumming, singing and dancing to engage people in discussion about domestic violence, HIV/AIDS and reproductive health. In Guinea, public education efforts bring together local NGOs and imams to explain that Islam does not condone the abuse of women.

By engaging both men and women, such civil society groups send a message that domestic violence is not an issue just for women, but a problem affecting the whole community. "Mindsets must change," Ms. Safiye Cagar, the UNFPA's director of information, told government and civil society representatives at the 2006 Commission on the Status of Women forum. Such change, said Ms. Cagar, can only be achieved through dialogue and debate, advocacy, community participation and the concerted mobilization of civil society. "Too many women are subjected to violence and made to feel shame . . . for crimes committed against them."

The real shame, Ms. Cagar said on International Women's Day, belongs to a world that allows such crimes to continue. "It is the responsibility of governments and society as a whole to condemn violence against women — and to take action to eliminate it." ■

AFRICA AGENDA

2–5 July 2007, Oxford (UK) — 6th Global Conference on Environmental Justice and Global Citizenship, at Mansfield College. Contact Ram Vemuri, e-mail <Ram.Vemuri@cdu.edu.au>, website <www.inter-disciplinary.net/ptb/ejgc/ejgc6/cfp.htm>

4-7 July 2007, Nairobi (Kenya) - International Women's Summit: Women's Leadership on HIV and AIDS. Organized by the World YWCA. Tel (254) 20 2724 789, e-mail <iws@worldywca.org>, website <www.worldywca.org>

11–14 July 2007, Leiden (The Netherlands) — 2nd Biennial European Conference on African Studies. Tel (31) 71 514 8203, fax (31) 71 512 8095, e-mail <conference@aegis-eu.org>, website <http://ecas2007.aegis-eu.org/>

27–31 August 2007, Johannesburg (South Africa) — African Banking Congress. Contact Josemir Taimo, tel (27) 11 516 4077, e-mail <josemir.taimo@terrapinn.co.za>, website <www.terrapinn.com/2007/bankza/>

29 August–1 September 2007, Oslo (Norway) — African Green Revolution Conference. Contact Suzanne O'Leary, tel (1-303) 996-8984, fax (1-303) 415-3650, e-mail <Suzanne@africangreenrevolution.com>, website <www.africangreenrevolutionconference.com>

9–13 September 2007, Oxford (UK) — Oxford Conference on Innovation and Technology Transfer for Global Health. Organized by the Centre for the Management of Intellectual Property in Health Research and Development. Contact Junko Chapman, tel (44) 1865 812041, fax (44) 1865 726965, e-mail <junko.chapman@mihr.org>, website <www.sbs.ox.ac.uk/events>

18–19 September 2007, Brussels (Belgium) — Africa Unbound: Health, Development and Investment Strategies, 2010-2012. Hosted by the Global Business Coalition on HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. Contact Therese Lethu, tel (33) 1 44 34 18 02, e-mail <tlethu@businessfightsaids.org>, website <www.businessfightsaids.org>

20–23 September 2007, Ontario (Canada) — 1st International Development Conference. Organized by the Centre for Agricultural Resources and International Development (CEFARD). Tel (1-416) 679-1125, e-mail <info@cefard.org>, website <www.cefard.org>

24-26 September 2007, Nairobi (Kenya) - First International Conference on Child Sexual Abuse in Africa. The aim of the conference is to advance knowledge regarding the various types of sexual abuse and their complexity in the cultural settings of Africa. Tel (254) 20 387 3990, fax (254) 20 387 6502, e-mail <regional@anppcan.org>, website <www.anppcan.org>

WHAT HAS TAKEN PLACE

30–31 May 2007, Accra (Ghana) — 2nd African Financing for Development Conference. Organized by the government of Ghana in collaboration with the UN Economic Commission for Africa and the African Development Bank. E-mail <info@financingfordevelopment.org>, website <www.financingfordevelopment.org/index.htm>

17–19 June 2007, Amsterdam (Netherlands) — Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Women in Violent Conflict. Sponsored by the Netherlands Defence Academy and Emory University Law School. E-mail <daniel@blocq.eu>

18–20 June 2007, Västerås (Sweden) — 3rd International Green Energy Conference. Contact J. Yan, e-mail <yanjy@ket.kth.se>, website <www.igec.info>

25 June–3 July 2007, Accra (Ghana) — 9th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union, devoted to a "Grand Debate on the Union Government". Website <www.africa-union.org>

26–29 June 2007, Vienna (Austria) — 7th Global Forum on Reinventing Government. Hosted by the UN and organized with the government of Austria, on the theme "Building Trust in Government." Contact G. Shabbir Cheema, e-mail <cheemas@un.org>, website <www.7thglobalforum.org/site3.aspx>

AFRICA BOOKS

Votes, Money and Violence: Political Parties and Elections in Sub-Saharan Africa, eds. Matthias Basedau, Gero Erdmann and Andreas Mehler (Nordic Africa Institute, Uppsala, Sweden, 2006; 300 pp; pb SEK 290, $37.50)

Burundi 1972 – Au bord des génocides by Jean-Pierre Chretien and Jean-François Dupaquier (Karthala, Paris, France, 2007; 560 pp; €25)

Africa: Continent of Economic Opportunity by David Fick (STE Publishers, Gauteng, South Africa, 2006; 512 pp; pb $80)

US Foreign Policy and the Horn of Africa by Peter Woodward (Ashgate Publishers, Aldershot, UK, 2006; 192 pp; hb $99.95, £55)

Africa — Up in Smoke? The Second Report from the Working Group on Climate Change and Development by Andrew Simms and Hannah Reid (Stylus Publishing, Herndon, Virginia, USA, 2006; 40 pp; pb $12.75, £10)

La Côte d'Ivoire: Construire le développement durable by Raymond Guisso Dogore (L'Harmattan, Paris, France, 2007; 120 pp; €12, FF79)

Child Soldiers in Africa by Alcinda Honwana (University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, PA, USA, 2007; 216 pp; pb $22.50, £15)

Escaping the Resource Curse, eds. Macartan Humphreys, Jeffrey D. Sachs and Joseph E. Stiglitz (Columbia University Press, New York, USA, 2007; 432 pp; hb $29.95, £19.50)

Council Unbound: The Growth of UN Decision Making on Conflict and Postconflict Issues after the Cold War by Michael J. Matheson (United States Institute of Peace Press, Washington, DC, USA, 2006; 336 pp; pb $19.95; hb $50)

A Roadmap for Understanding African Politics: Leadership and Political Integration in Nigeria by Victor Oguejiofor Okafor (Routledge, New York, USA, 2006; 272 pp; pb $95, £60)

Ethique et gouvernance: Le cas du Niger by Ismaël Aboubacar Yenikoye (L'Harmattan, Paris, France, 2007; 94 pp; pb €11, FF72)

Getting In: Mediators' Entry into the Settlement of African Conflicts by Mohammed O. Maundi, William Zartman, Gilbert M. Khadiagala and Kwaku Nuamah (United States Institute of Peace Press, Washington, DC, USA, 2006; 256 pp; pb $17.50, £12.50)

Guerres civiles et coups d'Etat en Afrique de l'Ouest: Comprendre les causes et identifier des solutions possibles by Issaka K. Souare (L'Harmattan, Paris, France, 2007; 294 pp; pb €26, FF177)

France-Gabon: Pratiques clientélaires et logiques d'Etat by Jean-François Obiang (Karthala, Paris, France, 2007; 392 pp; €29)

Combating Serious Crimes in Postconflict Societies: A Handbook for Policymakers and Practitioners, ed. Colette Rausch (United States Institute of Peace Press, Washington, DC, USA, 2006; 212 pp; pb $17.50)

Democratic Policing in Transitional and Developing Countries, eds. Nathan Pino and Michael D. Wiatrowski (Ashgate Publishing, Williston, Vermont, USA, 2006; 264 pp; hb $99.95)

Conflict and the Refugee Experience: Flight, Exile and Repatriation in the Horn of Africa by Assefaw Bariagaber (Ashgate Publishing, Williston, Vermont, USA, 2006; 196 pp; hb $99.95)

The Business Guide to Sustainability: Practical Strategies and Tools for Organizations by Darcy Hitchcock and Marsha Willard (Stylus Publishing, Herndon, Virginia, USA, 2006; 272 pp; pb $49.95)

La brousse, le champ et la jachère au Burkina Faso, eds. Robin Duponnois and Bernard Germain Lacombe (L'Harmattan, Paris, France, 2007; 190 pp; €17, FF112)

La fracture mondiale Afrique: Autopsie d'une tragédie by Ismaël Aboubacar Yenikoye (L'Harmattan, Paris, France, 2007; 186 pp; pb €16.50, FF108)

The Institutional Transformation of the Economic Community of West African States by Kofi Oteng Kufour (Ashgate Publishing, Williston, Vermont, USA, 2006; 190 pp; hb $99.95)

Negotiating Modernity: Africa's Ambivalent Experience, ed. Elísio Salvado Macamo (Zed Books, London, UK, 2006; hb £65, pb £18.95)

Oil, Profits and Peace: Does Business Have a Role in Peacemaking? by Jill Shankleman (United States Institute of Peace Press, Washington, DC, USA, 2007; 228 pp; pb $14.95, hb $35)

AFRICA WATCH

GROUP OF EIGHT

More promises for Africa

The annual summit of the world's major industrial countries, the Group of Eight (G-8), concluded in Heiligendamm, Germany, on 8 June with new pledges of support for African development. In a communiqué on Africa, the leaders of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, UK and US pledged $60 bn "over the coming years" to help Africa combat HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and other infectious diseases. They also reaffirmed a promise made at the 2005 G-8 meeting to increase aid to developing countries by $50 bn a year by 2010 — including $25 bn in additional support for Africa.

On the eve of the meeting, Oxfam International reported that the G-8 would, at present aid levels, miss their 2005 commitments by a full $30 bn. The group applauded the G-8 for cancelling the debts of 24 poor countries in 2005, including 18 in Africa, but noted that, globally, official development assistance actually dropped by more than 5 per cent in 2006, the first decline in a decade. Aid to Africa, Oxfam said, has risen just 2 per cent since 2004.

Irish rock star Bono, who campaigned for increased African aid at the 2005 meeting, criticized the 2007 declaration for lacking a timetable for funding increases. Some G-8 leaders are meeting their pledges, he said, "but collectively they are slipping up." ■

AFRICAN ECONOMIES

Robust growth to continue

African economies maintained robust growth rates in 2006, averaging 5.7 per cent last year on the strength of increased world prices for African commodity exports and better economic management. It was the third consecutive year that African economies have grown above 5 per cent annually, according to the UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), based in Addis-Ababa, Ethiopia. The ECA expects the trend to continue in 2007, with average rates forecast to reach 5.8 per cent. Among African economies, only crisis-bound Zimbabwe posted negative growth rates in 2006, while eight countries posted rates above 8 per cent.

Africa's 2006 growth figure, from the ECA's annual *Economic Report on Africa* (http://www.uneca.org/era2007/), was well above the 3.8 per cent average for the world as a whole. It reflected increased demand for African energy and minerals, particularly from China, India and other rapidly industrializing developing economies. The negative impact of high oil prices on non-oil producers, the report noted, had been cushioned by debt relief and higher export earnings. The ECA cautioned, however, that the development benefits of recent debt cancellations are proving "very slow to materialize" and that growth rates are still too low to have a significant impact on poverty levels. ■

APPOINTMENTS

UN / Evan Schneider

The UN Secretary-General has named Mr. **Francis Deng** of Sudan as his special adviser for the prevention of genocide and mass atrocities, succeeding Mr. Juan Mendez. At the time of his appointment, Mr. Deng served as director of the Sudan Peace Support Project. From 1992 to 2004, he was the UN Secretary-General's representative on internally displaced persons. He has also served as his country's ambassador to Canada, Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden and the US.

UN / Eskinder Debebe

Ms. **Josette Sheeran** of the US became the new executive director of the UN World Food Programme in April 2007. She previously served as under-secretary for economic, energy and agricultural affairs at the US Department of State. In 2006, she also served on the High-level UN Panel on System-wide Coherence. Ms. Sheeran brings to WFP more than 20 years of experience in the public and private sectors.

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Ms. **Elizabeth Mataka**, a Zambian policy-maker and activist, will serve as the UN Secretary-General's new special envoy for HIV/AIDS in Africa, succeeding Mr. Stephen Lewis of Canada. Ms. Mataka had been executive director of the Zambian National AIDS Network and vice-chairperson of the board of the Global Fund to Fight HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

US State Department

Mr. **Robert Zoellick**, a former deputy US secretary of state and trade representative, has been named by the World Bank's board of governors as the institution's new president, following the resignation of Mr. Paul Wolfowitz. At the time of his appointment, Mr. Zoellick was vice-chairman of the Goldman Sachs investment group. During the 1990s, he also served on numerous non-profit boards, including the Council on Foreign Relations and the Overseas Development Council, as well as on advisory councils of the World Wildlife Fund and the Institute of International Economics.

Ms. **Obiageli Ezekwesili** of Nigeria assumed the post of the World Bank's vice-president for Africa on 1 May 2007. Most recently, she was Nigeria's minister of education. Ms. Ezekwesili was a founding member of Transparency International, for which she served as director for Africa, and was also special assistant to the president of Nigeria on budget monitoring. She also served as Nigeria's minister of solid minerals development and since 2004, as Nigeria's chairperson for the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative.

The UN Secretary-General has named Mr. **Haile Menkerios** of Eritrea as assistant secretary-general for political affairs. Most recently, Mr. Menkerios was deputy special representative of the Secretary-General in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Previously, he also served his country as ambassador to Ethiopia and the Organization of African Unity, special envoy to Somalia and the Great Lakes region and permanent representative to the UN from 1991 to 2000. He succeeds Mr. Tuliameni Kalomoh of Namibia.